

# **Immigration**

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This first year in office, the president has deferred immigration reform until after the health bill passes. This will be a very controversial bill, and even President Bush was not able to succeed. However, immigrant groups have become very restless. Many groups have begun to have rallies; young people have joined the throngs. Latinos are not the only group affected. The wait for green cards among legal residents often takes 5-20 years.

The Migration Policy Association has shown that the immigrants' age-sex pyramid has a "diamond shape" with significantly fewer children and elderly than those between the ages of 15 and 64. The median age of immigrants today (40.8) in 2008 was similar to (40.0) in 1920. In earlier years there were many more men than women: approximately 131 men to 100 women. In 2008, there were 84 men to 100 women...

Sweeps of illegals who have criminal records continue. Federal prosecutions of immigrants make up more than half of all criminal cases in federal courts. The system now has about 32,000 detainees each day across the country. Some of the detainees are women and children. The Dept. Of Homeland Security is planning to change the prisonlike arrangements. Nonviolent persons could be housed in converted hotels or nursing homes. The cost for detention is \$100 a day and an alternative could be as low as \$14 a day. The budget for detention and deportation is \$2.5 billion a year.

In 2007, immigrants made up 15.6% of the U.S. labor force. This is the highest share since 1930. Immigrants made up a sizeable share of the labor force at the high and the low ends of the skill spectrum— 28% hold a doctor's degree and 36% with no high school diploma.

In 2008, there were 11.9 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S. & million from Mexico, 1.4 million from Central America, 1.3 from Southeast Asia, 525,000 from Europe and Canada, 500,000 from the Caribbean, 190,000 from the Middle East and 300,000 of others.

Immigrants continue to come, the Mexican government estimates that more than 5,000 Mexicans have died in the desert. In Chicago, Chinese immigrants have complained to the authorities of extortion, children brought by their parents face hardships in seeking higher education.

Bills have been introduced in the Congress, In the House by Luis Gutierrez, a 700 page bill developed with communities, labor unions and other interested groups. In the Senate a bill was introduced by Charles Schumer. Conservative groups are already sending blast e-mails and faxes against these bills. The House wants to wait for the Senate to act first on the issue. A more moderate immigration bill is expected to be introduced by Sen. Harry Reid. The argument against bringing it up has been the continuing unemployment.

One proposal is that employers try to hire Americans before bringing in more foreign workers. Another idea is to reunify families-a prevalent issue among Asian families. And the story goes on.